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SUBJECT: EUROPEAN BRIEF [REDACTED] FOR 7 APRIL 1990

[REDACTED] YUGOSLAVIA: DEMOCRATIZATION MAY BRING DISSOLUTION [REDACTED]

THE SEPARATIST MOVEMENT HAS SHAPED THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE SLOVENE ELECTIONS, THE FIRST FREE ELECTIONS IN YUGOSLAVIA SINCE WORLD WAR II; THE OUTCOME OF THE VOTE THAT BEGINS TOMORROW WILL SET THE TONE FOR ELECTIONS IN OTHER REPUBLICS AND TO A LARGE EXTENT WILL DETERMINE SLOVENIA'S FUTURE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE YUGOSLAV FEDERATION. [REDACTED]

ELECTIONS TOMORROW AND THURSDAY WILL CHOOSE THE SLOVENE REPUBLIC PRESIDENT AND FILL SLOVENIA'S FOUR COLLECTIVE PRESIDENCY SLOTS AND THE THREE CHAMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY. ON 22 APRIL, RUNOFF ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD FOR POSITIONS, INCLUDING THE PRESIDENCY, THAT REQUIRE A MAJORITY VOTE. IN THE THIRD WEEK OF APRIL, CROATIANS WILL ELECT MEMBERS TO SEATS IN ALL THREE CHAMBERS OF THE REPUBLIC ASSEMBLY. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] UNRELIABLE POLLS AND THE LARGE NUMBER OF UNDECIDED VOTERS REDUCE THE ACCURACY OF PREDICTIONS, BUT THE DEMOS COALITION APPEARS TO BE AHEAD OF THE COMMUNISTS AND COULD CAPTURE A MAJORITY OF ASSEMBLY SEATS. DEMOS HAS TAKEN THE INITIATIVE BY PLAYING TO SLOVENE SENTIMENTS FOR GREATER AUTONOMY AT A TIME OF GROWING NATIONALIST FERVOR. PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE JOZE PUCNIK HAS BEEN EDGING UP ON COMMUNIST MILAN KUCAN, ONCE THE CLEAR FRONTRUNNER. [REDACTED]

THE LIBERAL SLOVENE COMMUNISTS HAVE THEMSELVES BEEN ADVOCATES OF SLOVENE RIGHTS BUT PROBABLY WILL SUFFER FROM MORE THAN 45 YEARS OF COMMUNIST RULE AND THE OUSTING OF COMMUNISTS ELSEWHERE IN EASTERN EUROPE. MOST OBSERVERS CONSIDER 20 PERCENT OF THE ASSEMBLY VOTE WOULD BE A STRONG SHOWING FOR THE COMMUNISTS. [REDACTED]

~~SECRET~~

THE THIRD MAJOR CONTENDER IS THE FORMER COMMUNIST YOUTH ORGANIZATION, WHICH HAS TRANSFORMED ITSELF INTO THE LIBERAL PARTY. SEVERAL SOURCES SUGGEST IT COULD CAPTURE AS MUCH AS 15 TO 20 PERCENT OF THE ASSEMBLY VOTE. IF SO, IT COULD PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN FORMING A COALITION GOVERNMENT.

SLOVENIA'S FUTURE TIES TO THE YUGOSLAV FEDERATION HAVE BEEN THE CENTRAL ISSUE. THE WINNER IS CERTAIN TO FEEL PRESSURE FOR CHANGE. ALL PARTIES ARE CALLING FOR GREATER AUTONOMY FOR SLOVENIA AND FOR MAKING YUGOSLAVIA INTO A LOOSER CONFEDERATION, AND ONE PARTY IN THE DEMOS ALLIANCE HAS CALLED OPENLY FOR SECESSION. A STRONG DEMOS WIN, PARTICULARLY IF PUCNIK DEFEATS KUCAN, COULD PUSH THE REPUBLIC FURTHER TOWARD INDEPENDENCE.

THE SLOVENE ELECTIONS BEGIN A PERIOD OF HIGH RISK FOR YUGOSLAVIA. THE MORIBUND COMMUNIST PARTY, WHICH HAS HELD THE MULTIETHNIC FEDERATION TOGETHER SINCE WORLD WAR II, IS BEING REPLACED BY ETHNIC-BASED PARTIES WITH LITTLE OR NO CONCERN FOR NATIONAL UNITY. MOREOVER, THE CROATIAN COMMUNIST PARTY IS EXPECTED TO DO POORLY AGAINST OPPOSITION GROUPS--WHICH INCLUDE ULTRANATIONALISTS--IN ELECTIONS LATER THIS MONTH.

THE YUGOSLAV PARTIES

COMMUNISTS

THE LEAGUE OF COMMUNISTS OF SLOVENIA HAS LENGTHENED ITS NAME TO INCLUDE THE WORDS PARTY FOR DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL TO UNDERSCORE ITS BREAK WITH THE PAST. THE PARTY HAD A REPUTATION FOR SPEARHEADING DEMOCRATIC REFORM LONG BEFORE COMMUNISM IN EASTERN EUROPE BEGAN TO WANE. IT CHAMPIONED SLOVENIAN REPUBLIC LEGISLATION LAST FALL ASSERTING THE RIGHT TO SECEDE AND GAINED WIDESPREAD APPROVAL AMONG SLOVENES BY ATTACKING SERBIA'S REPRESSION IN KOSOVO. NEVERTHELESS, PARTY MEMBERSHIP HAS FALLEN GREATLY IN THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS.

DEMOS

DEMOS, A SEVEN-PARTY COALITION, HAS A BROAD CONSTITUENCY, INCLUDING PEASANTS, GREENS, LEFTISTS, LIBERALS, CONSERVATIVES, SMALL BUSINESS INTERESTS, AND RETIRED PERSONS. DEMOS SEES CONFEDERALISM AS AN INTERMEDIATE STEP TO SECESSION. ITS PLATFORM INCLUDES A SEPARATE REPUBLIC ARMY, CURRENCY, AND FOREIGN POLICY AND OPPOSITION TO PREMIER ANTE MARKOVIC'S ECONOMIC REFORM PROGRAM.

LIBERALS

THE CENTRIST LIBERAL PARTY REPORTEDLY HAS WIDE POPULARITY BUT SUFFERS FROM LACK OF DIRECTION. AS A COMMUNIST YOUTH LEAGUE, IT GAVE STRONG IMPETUS TO LIBERALIZATION IN SLOVENIA. SINCE IT BECAME A PARTY IN DECEMBER, HOWEVER, MORE ORTHODOX COMMUNISTS HAVE TAKEN OVER THE LEADERSHIP AND RUN A DULL CAMPAIGN.